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Shultz Clearance By Full Senate Expected Today

Secretary-of-State Nominee Is Approved by 17-0 Vote In Action of Committee

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WASHINGTON — George Shultz sailed through Senate confirmation hearings without any real congressional opposition to his nomination to become secretary of state.

After a second day of low-key hearings, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved Mr. Shultz's nomination by a 17-0 vote yesterday and sped it on to the full Senate. The nomination is likely to be approved there today, and Mr. Shultz will be sworn in quickly, Reagan administration officials said.

Republican leaders were pushing through Mr. Shultz's nomination so he can deal with the volatile Mideast situation and participate in the administration debate over grain sales to the Soviet Union. The White House scheduled a cabinet-level meeting for today at which the grain issue is expected to be discussed.

Mr. Shultz said at his confirmation hearings that he opposes signing a new long-term grain deal with the Soviets now because it would signal that the U.S. isn't still concerned about repression in Poland. But he didn't rule out continuing grain sales, either by extending an existing agreement or through the open market.

Mr. Shultz fielded questions from the Senate panel for about four hours yesterday, but the session produced little drama. He did stake out firm positions in favor of continued arms sales to Taiwan and against forcing the Salvadoran government into talks with guerrillas. He also appeared to ease some lawmakers' uneasiness over his views on the proliferation of nuclear technology.

Sen. Barry Goldwater (R., Ariz.), who isn't a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, made a special appearance to question Mr. Shultz about Taiwan. Mr. Shultz seemed to favor closer ties to Taiwan than those endorsed by the man he will succeed at the State Department, Alexander Haig.

Needs of Taiwanese

Under questioning by Sen. Goldwater, Mr. Shultz agreed that the U.S. should sell Taiwan defensive arms as long it needs them, without any deadline for cutting off sales. He also pledged to consult Congress before reaching any decisions about arms sales.

Similarly, he agreed that the U.S. should set its Taiwan policy "solely" according to the needs of the Taiwanese, rather than according to the wishes of the People's Republic of China. He also said he will advise President Reagan to send Congress notification that the U.S. will let Taiwan continue producing Northrop Corp.'s F-5E jet fighter plane: the president has said he will allow continued production, but formal notification has been delayed by talks with the Chinese.

Mr. Shultz's comments are sure to anger the Chinese government, which bitterly opposes continued arms sales to Taiwan. The Chinese have hinted they may downgrade relations with the U.S. if the sales continue.

Mr. Haig favored moving away from Taiwan and closer to China, theorizing that closer U.S.-Chinese ties would offset growing Soviet military power. The State Department recently sent the White House a series of options for dealing with Taiwan that included suggestions for phasing out arms sales, sources familiar with the issue have said.

In general, Mr. Shultz sketched out plans for a tough but less acerbic relationship with the Soviet Union. He said the U.S. should be "clear" about its disagreements with the Soviets but that it doesn't have to be "flamboyant" about voicing its differences. He implied that the era of detente didn't improve Soviet behavior, but added that the U.S. still should work for "constructive and mutually beneficial relations" with Moscow.

Mr. Shultz argued that the U.S. shouldn't push El Salvador's new government to invite guerrilla groups to participate in the government. He contended El Salvador would set a bad precedent by letting rebels "shoot their way into power."

Covert Activities as Options

He said he couldn't confirm reports circulating earlier this year that the U.S. has approved plans for covert activities to destabilize Nicaragua's leftist government. But in general, he said, covert activities are something we should have in our set of options, and definitely we should have the ability to use covert operations.

Sen. Alan Cranston (D., Calif.), a consistent critic of the spread of sensitive nuclear technology, said he was "deeply" troubled by some comments Mr. Shultz made Tuesday about export of nuclear materials. At that time, Mr. Shultz complained that the

U.S. had lost some of its ability to influence nuclear programs abroad because it had clamped down so tightly on its exports.

Mr. Shultz argued yesterday that the U.S. can limit the risk that nuclear materials will be turned into weapons by cooperating with other industrial nations in setting up a system of stringent safeguards. And he said the U.S. should be "extraordinarily careful" about nuclear exports.

But he added: "It is our interest to see nuclear power used."

Sen. Cranston appeared relieved by yesterday's explanation and voted to confirm Mr. Shultz.